

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:04 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Kreider, Sullebarger, Raser and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield, Spraul-Schmidt and Chatterjee.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 107 WEST CLIFTON AVENUE, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish 107 W. Clifton Avenue. The vacant building has suffered neglect and further damage from a fire at the adjacent 109 W. Clifton Avenue. The integrity of the streetscape has been diminished through other demolitions on the block. Staff felt demolition was reasonable for these reasons.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Kellam stated that the property is on the northwest edge of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. She added that staff found this block and specifically 107 W. Clifton Avenue has lost its architectural integrity and it no longer contributed to the historic district.

In response to Mr. Kreider, Ms. Kellam stated that Philippus Church, located downhill from 107 W. Clifton Avenue, had expressed concern that the building could slide down the hill and damage its property.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Raser) to take the following actions:

1. Find that the building at 107 W. Clifton Avenue no longer contributes to the character of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District and the streetscape has been lost.
2. Find that there is no reasonable economic return to be gained from the use of all or part of the building which would conform to the guidelines and the strict application of the guidelines would deny the owner a reasonable rate of return on the real property; and amount to a taking of the property of the owner without just compensation.
3. Find that the demolition is an acceptable loss.
4. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 107 W. Clifton Avenue.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 216-218 MAGNOLIA STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish 216-218 Magnolia Street. She stated that on December 2, 2005, the Department of Buildings & Inspections condemned the building and ordered the owner to remove the structure or to remedy the conditions that cause it to be dangerous and unsafe. Ms. Cowden indicated the building had sustained extensive fire and water damage and that the roof structure was compromised. Staff believed the building had suffered such inappropriate modifications and structural degradation that it may no longer contribute to the historic district. She added the applicant intends to use the cleared land to enlarge the adjacent surface parking lot at 220-222 Magnolia Street. In response to Mr. Senhauser, Ms. Cowden stated that no plans have been submitted for the parking lot and agreed the demolition should be contingent on the review and approval of plans for the lot.

Richard P. Gableman, legal representation for the applicant, stated that he agreed with staff recommendations.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Raser) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 216-218 Magnolia Street, finding that building is a non-contributing resource in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District and its demolition will not adversely affect the character of the historic district or streetscape with the following conditions:

1. Plans and specifications for any new construction on the cleared site, including a replacement building and/or parking lot, shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for the review and approval of the Historic Conservation Board prior to the demolition of 216-218 Magnolia Street.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW AND ZONING VARIANCES, 317-321 BOAL STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances to construct identical decks on three adjoining properties on Boal Street. Ms. Kellam stated that a second floor window opening would be altered to a doorway on each property to provide access onto the decks. Although the design met the guidelines, Zoning Variances were needed for the setbacks as proposed. Additionally, outdoor patios could be installed at grade without variances and would provide an alternative possibility to the proposed project. Ms. Kellam added that many neighbors had similar decks on their properties.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Kellam stated that the applicants would like the decks to be accessible directly from the living area and that the lowest level is a basement, used only for storage and was accessed by a narrow stair. Derrick Tarver, the project's co-applicant with Robert Adams, added that a second floor deck would provide outdoor living space and allow for socialization with neighbors that have outdoors spaces on the same level. He stated that the basement level was dark and unappealing.

In response to Ms. Sullebarger, Mr. Tarver stated that the glass block infill and front door security grill on the Boal Street façade were present when he purchased the property. Mr. Senhauser pointed out the furnace vent installed through the basement door transom would discharge exhaust to the deck above. He questioned whether this would meet code.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Kellam stated that she had received numerous letters from nearby neighbors all in support of the proposed decks. Ms. Wallace stated that she felt the decks provided the best option for outdoor space.

Ms. Sullebarger stated that she felt Ms. Kellam interpreted the Zoning Code correctly and that the applicant had not yet provided adequate justification for the Board to grant the requested zoning variances. She added that the units already have roof decks to provide outdoor space. She stated that historically, the basements were used as living space and that a deck built above would increase the darkness of the lower level.

Mr. Tarver stated that he was very active in and committed to the neighborhood. He stated that building a deck on the second level would provide him with the same quality of life afforded his neighbors and an opportunity to socialize further with them. Mr. Adams agreed with Mr. Tarver and added that the neighborhood members socialize in the backyards, on the second floor deck level. He stated the basement level is too dark and much lower than that of the neighbors.

Ms. Wallace complimented the applicants on their desire to facilitate community socialization and for following the proper historic district procedures for their project. She stated that she felt the applicants had provided adequate documentation for approval of the project.

Scott Rogers, neighbor, stated that he was impressed with the applicant's attitude and approach. He stated that he felt the alteration of the window opening to a door was minor. He said that a patio on the basement level would be ineffective and inconvenient.

Mr. Raser stated that he felt the applicants needed to provide more documentation to illustrate their case and to justify the necessary variances. He suggested providing information on the existing decks in the neighborhood. Mr. Kreider agreed and made a motion to table the matter to give the applicants the opportunity to provide the Board with more comprehensive information and plans. He stated that the proposed decks were not highly visible and would give the applicants the same quality of life afforded to their neighbors. Ms. Wallace stated that she opposed tabling the project because she felt the applicants had provided adequate documentation and had support from neighbors.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (4 aye, 1 nay) (motion by Kreider, second by Sullebarger) (Wallace opposed) to table the application in order to allow the applicants the opportunity to provide additional documentation to justify necessary zoning variances.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 3742 SACHEM AVENUE, COLUMBIA TUSCULUM HISTORIC DISTRICT & HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report for a proposed new single-family residence at 3742 Sachem Avenue. Ms. Cowden briefly summarized the history of the property and an overview of the proposal. She stated that the Department of Buildings and Inspections had not yet reviewed the project for compliance with the Zoning Code but that variances would likely be required. She said that the overall scale, massing and detailing of the proposed residence were not characteristic of the Columbia Tusculum Historic District or Sachem Avenue. She added that staff had suggested the applicant explore alternative designs and engage an architect to prepare plans and elevations. The applicant, Remco deJong, insisted on presenting his design to the Historic Conservation Board for its review and consideration.

Mr. deJong stated that he would work on the drawings to bring them up to Board's standards. He distributed pictures of homes in Columbia Tusculum. He stated that the average square footage of homes in the neighborhood was 1,700 square feet. Mr. deJong used a laptop computer to show Board members plans for his proposed residence. He stated that due to the topography and the width of his lot the house would be viewed from the side. Mr. deJong based the design, in part, on this reasoning.

Ms. Sullebarger stated that the roof pitch, massing and proportion were not typical of the neighborhood and that the front gable was wider than the side. She suggested that the applicant work on the interior design space requirements first and use that information to refine the exterior.

Mr. Senhauser stated that he had no opposition to the size of the home, but explained that the design needed to fit the scale, rhythm and proportion of the neighborhood. He said that the home would need to be compatible to, but not necessarily replicative of other homes in the area. He added that due to the limited drawings it was difficult to give specific suggestions.

Mr. Raser said he felt the design had not come together yet and needed to be simplified. He suggested that the porch be wrapped around from the front to the side.

Margo Warminski, Cincinnati Preservation Association, stated that the design needed refinement in regards to mass, scale and pitch. She suggested that the applicant consider a contemporary design. Mr. Kreider added that not all of the homes in the neighborhood were of the Queen Anne style and that there was a collection of styles with common themes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Forwood provided the Historic Conservation Board members with a handout on the Historic Tax Credit.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____